



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

SEVEN YEARS OF DANIELS

BY ARCHIBALD DOUGLAS TURNBULL

DURING the last few months, the press has printed a good many columns about the United States Navy. Much of this has been in the form of incomplete accounts of investigations by subcommittees of Congress. However, the newspapers, like the committees themselves, have been greatly affected by political leanings. Consequently, the statements of witnesses and the conclusions to be drawn have been presented in a partisan light. Again, no small amount of the matter thus printed has been inspired by the Administration, designed to disarm criticism, however just, and to juggle statistics until the figures mean nothing to the uninformed reader. In this move the Administration has been greatly assisted by the public's general ignorance of the Navy, its aims, its difficulties, its true condition, and by the national tendency to hold everything American as superlative and therefore unassailable. The combination of these several factors has resulted in throwing but little clear light upon the actual status of the Navy. Assuming that the nation is convinced that it should have a fighting force afloat, the attempt will be made to discuss, without citing figures, the underlying reasons for our having no such thing today. Questions of money appropriations by Congress, General Board recommendations, ship construction, strategy, and tactics are not considered here. For important as they are, all these are but adjuncts of the real motive force, the Spirit of the Service.

In the year 1912, spirit was at a very high point in the Navy. Broadly speaking, loyalty up and down was generally prevalent. Eliminating occasional and entirely natural individual prejudices, the feeling between officers and enlisted men of all grades was one of cordial liking and mutual respect. Plenty of work, plenty of play, with keen

but friendly rivalry in both, characterized the organization. Rare indeed was the skipper who would not, outside his own ship, swear by every member of his command. While unless too recently court-martialled and consequently a little sorry for himself, scarce a man of any enlisted rating was not joyfully ready to roll up his sleeve at any outside criticism of his ship or his shipmates. She might be "this damned old battle-wagon," in the wardroom; she might be "a workhouse with a tough Old Man," around the Bo's'n's sand-locker at five-thirty on a nasty morning; she might be anything she should not be, inside the family. But once over the side she became the best ship afloat, take on all comers and bar none. That was the state of affairs up to March, 1913.

Upon his induction into office Mr. Josephus Daniels, the present Secretary of the Navy, was as ignorant of the spirit of the service as he was of the meaning of the terms "fighting ship," "readiness for war," or "first line of national defense." It is not hard to understand this ignorance; it is not even hard to forgive it. Mr. Daniels was entirely without experience in life which might fit him to understand any of these things. But there was one thing which he fully understood—politics. Therefore, to him, the Navy was a wonderfully organized machine for vote-getting, and it stood ready for operation by his trained hand. From this point of view, he saw two sets of tools, the officers and the enlisted men, each set quite distinct. Taking first the officer, Mr. Daniels saw him as a man clever enough to get himself educated at the expense of the government. Obviously, the officer, being a grafter, could be exploited in one way or another. Again, the officer, wearing a more or less decorative uniform, was received in good circles of society. What more logical inference than that he was a snob? Finally, since he was constantly changing his station, the officer had but little opportunity to exercise his constitutional right to vote. From which Mr. Daniels argued that he could be insulted with perfect safety. Considering the enlisted man, the new Secretary viewed him as younger on the average, and relatively less well-educated, but ambitious. No doubt he could be easily influenced. Add to this the fact that at the end of an enlistment, many men became, for a time at least, ordinary citizens making regular visits to the polls, and the possibilities of the situation were at once

apparent to a keen political brain. Entirely neglecting psychology, Mr. Daniels started earnestly to work along the lines laid down by his reasoning.

In order that the enlisted men might have no doubts upon their new status, Mr. Daniels visited one of the battle-ships. Waving away the official quarterdeck reception, prepared according to regulation for the holder of his office, the Secretary hurried forward to the forecabin. Mounting one of the mess-benches, he addressed the amazed crew in some such words as these:

"Boys, I've come to tell you that I am going to run the Navy for you. There won't be any more of this oppression by the officers. Whenever you think that you aren't getting a square deal, just write and tell me all about it. Never mind about any red tape, either—just come straight to me. I'm your best friend, and I know you're mine."

That the head of the Navy should make an announcement so entirely at variance with the regulations of any military or naval organization was a staggering blow to that ship's company. It was perfectly well known that anyone with a grievance, real or fancied, could at any time report it through the proper channels and ask for redress. But to write to the Secretary, or the Department, without reference to one's commanding officer, even if heard of, was universally condemned, forward and aft. It is reported, in this case, that after the departure of the Secretary the Captain, in his turn, addressed the assembled ship's company. It is unlikely that he had occasion to mount a mess-bench, but it is certain that he spoke with that picturesqueness and force of language for which he is not without his reputation. He intimated that no such practice as had been just suggested would be followed on that ship—at least during his incumbency of the captain's cabin.

Unfortunately, the first seeds of discontent and sedition had been sown, the first "white mice" in the Navy had been born.

This incident is fairly typical of hundreds, many of which have been described elsewhere in print. From such beginnings, the uplift work went merrily on. A flood of orders, all more or less impossible of enforcement, all more or less subversive of discipline, emanated from the Secretary's office, in the ensuing years. These were greeted, aloft and aloft, with sentiments varying from amused tolerance

to scorn. Among them may be mentioned the orders relative to schools aboard ship for the enlisted men.

Here was something which, properly applied, might have wrought a great good. It had always been a cardinal principle aboard ship that any man of lower rating who wished to study, must be encouraged to apply for text-books or other help to his officers. In a quiet way, no small amount of such work was going forward in the Fleet. The day, however, had not yet been completely divided into study hours. No one had entertained the idea of making such evolutions as coaling ship or target practice depend upon "recess." Yet the plan, in the early days of 1914, was a fetish with Mr. Daniels. When rifles, machine-guns, and even ships' five-inch batteries had been firing for several days into Vera Cruz; when nineteen lives had paid for the Administration's flat refusal to allow the Admiral commanding to conduct a really military operation; when, due to the withdrawal of our ships from Tampico, at the Secretary's, not Admiral Mayo's order, it became necessary to hoist the British ensign on an American yacht to protect American refugees from the fire of Mexican batteries ashore; when all these activities were absorbing the interest of most of the Navy in the Atlantic, many messages were received from Washington. Almost the last of these, when decoded, read: "School and similar exercises may be temporarily suspended."

General Order Number 99—the famous prohibition order—is another sample. Quite apart from the wholly libellous implication that naval officers were all drunkards, the order accomplished nothing in a practical way beyond increasing the officer's living expenses. He could no longer return hospitality, as at that time understood in the United States, aboard ship, but must take his guests to an hotel. The effect of drink upon efficiency had been, in point of fact, negligible. For countless years, the principle of the service had been "up anchor,—in cork!" With the anchor down, it was no great trouble to go ashore for a drink. When one "horrible example" had been dismissed, the Secretary pointed out that this officer had "actually learned to drink in the Navy." This statement of the case can be accepted at its full value, when it is realized that this officer entered the Naval Academy at about fifteen.

A less widely recognized blow at the officer personnel

was attempted by Mr. Daniels through the Naval Academy itself. He proposed to remove the officers on duty as instructors, and to substitute civilians. The reason given out was the inability of the officers to teach. It is not, however, hard to see through this move to secure to his own gift an additional number of nice appointments. With a characteristic desire to cover up his real intent, the Secretary appointed a Board, made up of university presidents and nationally known educators. This Board he assembled in his private office, before its visit to Annapolis. To it, he presented its own conclusion, cut and dried, to be made public after the ostensible "investigation" of the school and its curriculum. Practically, there remained only the mere formality of signing the report.

Fortunately for the Navy, though doubtless somewhat to his own consternation, Mr. Daniels promptly discovered that he had not made his selections with sufficient care. Certain members flatly refused to be dictated to, and visited Annapolis with open minds to make a real investigation of the situation. To them it was at once clear that, at the Naval Academy, more than book-learning was involved. The midshipman must from his first hour begin absorbing the discipline, the traditions, and the spirit of the service. All these would come to him naturally and easily from naval officers. From civilians they would come not at all. Equally apparent was the fact that, while a sprinkling of civilians as instructors was desirable in such special branches as foreign languages, it was vital that the required qualifications be made so high as to lift these posts out of politics. After a protracted fight against the partisan members, these high-minded gentlemen won a victory for the Navy. Indeed, so complete was their defeat of Mr. Daniels' project that it was only after another hard struggle that they were able to force the publication of the Board's report.

In the meantime, it had become clear to the Secretary, early in his first term, that to carry out his idea of belittling the snob, it was necessary for him to seek out the grafters. No other explanation will fit his unceasing efforts to get into the high places those officers whom he could bend to his will. Without in the least giving up his attitude of feeling that no officer of a mere thirty years experience could tell him how to run the Navy, Mr. Daniels was fain to admit that someone must be beside him, to attend to the

details. Accordingly he began to offer choice stations and duties to those upon whom he thought he might depend.

To the average officer of rank, a post of any professional value, combined with a chance for anything approaching home and family life, is regarded as something ardently to be wished for, and hard to get. Duty in Washington, for example. Amid pleasant surroundings here, if anywhere, is the opportunity to get into trial operation by the Fleet some long-cherished plan for controlling the fire of turret-guns, some carefully-studied scheme for the organization of the personnel, or for the operation of machinery. Similarly, posts at navy yards or gun-factories are highly prized. It was such plums as these that the Secretary of the Navy held out, with, of course, no mention of the attached proviso, complete agreement with himself, or failing that, a slavish acquiescence. Many officers accepted these posts which they could hardly refuse. Beginning their work with high hopes, they found themselves, shortly, in the hottest water. From them advice was not sought, was rarely even grudgingly accepted. They were expected to act as messengers, or as copy boys carrying publicity matter to the newspapers. Apart from this, their job was to stand by and applaud Mr. Daniels. The chafing under this system can easily be appreciated. As one after another protested, he was silenced, or sent to some undesirable duty, making room for some one less particular. Admiral Fiske, internationally recognized as an inventor and as a strategist, was forced by the Secretary to resign because he had the courage to tell the truth and keep on telling it. His is a very good case in point. When the attempt was made to fill the Admiral's post of chief adviser (?) to the Secretary every admiral to whom it was offered refused point-blank. Officers who remained on duty in Washington at other posts fought a gallant but generally losing fight. Most of them stayed only to save what they could. Through the fortunate periodic absences of the Secretary, and mainly through the as yet unconquered spirit of the service, the creeping tide of politics was turned back here and there by these devoted souls.

Outside the Department, the personnel situation became more and more grave. The enlisted men, with a judgment so good as to have been long proverbial, early in the game had diagnosed Mr. Daniels' case as aggravated votomania.

For the most part, even those who seemed to profit by his measures disapproved of him and of all his methods.

Old-timers among the men easily recognized the fact that such of their fellows as could reach politicians were, like officers similarly situated, in line for all the good jobs. Merit was nothing—pull everything. So these old-timers, in increasing numbers, failed to re-enlist. The greater proportion of the enlisted personnel became recruits. To these young men the traditions of the Navy meant nothing, and could mean nothing, without second- and third-cruise men to pass on the customs and manners. Reports, recommendations, and protests from naval commanders upon personnel went unheeded, until officers grew tired of writing letters. But there was one plan adopted by the Secretary to keep up a show of enlisted strength which is worthy of remark. This was the reform-school method of treating prisoners.

At naval prisons, such as that at Portsmouth, N. H., men, duly found guilty by court-martial of serious offences, are confined for varying terms. It was to this class that Mr. Daniels, early in his term, turned his attention. Very shortly, these men began to reappear in the service, and aboard ships, when they had completed only small fractions of their sentences. Protests came at once, from many commanding officers. As usual, these availed nothing. It is a matter of written record in the Department that not only were thieves lightly sent back to duty, but that men sentenced to long terms for unspeakable crimes against society were released among decent bluejackets. Recent attempts to investigate these matters have been defeated, largely by spiriting away witnesses, but the facts remain. The effect upon the Navy was not long ago brought out by Captain Joseph Taussig. This officer will be remembered as the commander of the first American destroyer division to reach British waters in 1917, and as replying to the question of probable readiness for duty off the Irish coast with the remark: "We're ready now!" Captain Taussig was not allowed the Court of Inquiry which he requested, but he has had the satisfaction of indignantly refusing a "good job for keeping his mouth shut."

Under the growing weight of acts and incidents such as those described, officers and men became disgusted and discouraged. As the inevitable result, talk began every-

where, in all grades, on all ships. And wherever, in a gathering, criticism was not unanimously bitter, suspicion of brother officers was born. Distrust of seniors grew up with loss of confidence in subordinates. No one could be sure that his neighbor, unless an intimate, was not a tale-bearer. Let an officer be ordered to any good post, he was certain to be labelled by someone as a protégé of the Secretary's. Energy and ambition went the way of initiative. The service attitude became one of trying to keep out of trouble, of waiting with what patience one could muster for a new régime. When the United States finally decided to enter the World War, the Navy shook itself out of its lethargy. Notwithstanding the general knowledge of national unpreparedness, the chance for active service made the prospect bright. It was argued that, in the face of actual war, many of the petty annoyances would disappear, making the redemption of the Navy possible.

However, it shortly became evident that politics still held most of the high cards in the game, as the great expansion of the Navy began. This step, long foreseen and urgently recommended by many officers, had been persistently neglected by the pacifist Administration. It is very doubtful whether it can be shown that one five-cent piece was ever spent for men, ships, munitions, or any other preparation against possible war, at the instigation of Mr. Daniels. Consequently, the enormous work which became inevitable in the first months of 1917 was hurriedly and imperfectly got under way. Immense sums were spent where smaller amounts, applied earlier, would have sufficed. And in the addition of great numbers of temporary officers, many mistakes were made, much injustice was done. So far as the Secretary was interested, his anxiety appears to have been directed toward providing for all the young men whose chief professional qualification was the right political view. He took just as good care of those, among the countless hundreds enlisting, whose names were presented to him by members of Congress or other vote-producers. Thus fine duty and promotion were made easy for reserve stay-at-homes while those on active service abroad, having only the recommendations of their commanding officers, could be safely disregarded. Taking into consideration the amount of major and minor politics involved in the formation of the Reserve, the splendid

record made by that body, a record ungrudgingly acclaimed by the regular service, is nothing less than extraordinary.

There is a wide-spread current of feeling in the country that Mr. Daniels, through the general performance of his Department during the war, has redeemed himself. It should be distinctly understood that no credit whatever is really due to the Secretary. Whatever of honor and distinction belongs to the Navy is the Navy's own. Practically every military step was taken only after a hard-fought battle between "win the war" and "get the votes."

Captain Leigh Palmer, then acting Rear-Admiral, was by a stroke of good fortune, Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, a Bureau second to none in importance. This able officer, on his own responsibility, carried on recruiting after being told to stop it; started training-schools for officers; authorized the spending of necessary money even before it had been appropriated by Congress; and carried opposition to the Secretary's whims to the point of direct disobedience of orders. In a hundred ways Admiral Palmer fearlessly braved the wrathful censure of Mr. Daniels and daily risked his very commission in a service as yet quite unappreciated by the nation. In all of his work, he was assisted, in the Department, by a host of officers too numerous to mention, but well known to the service.

The Navy afloat, on this side of the Atlantic, began and carried on its tasks under the same inspiration. Chief among these tasks was the thankless one of training thousands of raw recruits for duty overseas. Officers of many years experience ate out their hearts in longing for service in Europe while spending hours in unproductive patrolling off our own coast. Time after time they touched the edge of the war-zone, when escorting transports, only to turn back again. Concerning the success of the "Atlantic Ferry," the carrying of millions of soldiers by the Naval Overseas Transport Service, many speeches have been made. But the country probably does not even know the names of Captain Byron Long and ex-Commander Charles Belknap. These officers, the one in London, the other in Washington, were the active working heads whose days and nights were spent in study over this huge piece of work. Neither was selected for the duty by Mr. Daniels, but the high efficiency of both has been credited to his account.

Admiral Sims, in supreme command of the Navy in

Europe and first selected for the post by the Assistant Secretary, is a figure well known in America. Yet it does not seem to be realized, even now, that the Admiral accomplished much more than the mere building up of an efficient fighting force. As an American of the type of Leonard Wood and Theodore Roosevelt he engendered and fostered, throughout all classes and countries of Europe, a strong liking and a great respect for America. In all his great work he was not ardently supported by the Secretary. Upon the contrary, he was often opposed, frequently thwarted. Many of his recommendations, made as the responsible commander, were absolutely ignored. Most of the backing he got was cabled or mailed to him while the Secretary's back was turned. If submitted to the Secretary, the matter in hand, very likely of vital moment, had to be weighed in the political balance and was apt to be pigeon-holed among rough drafts of campaign speeches. Toward the end of his service in Europe, the Admiral was actually forced to write the Department that he could not perform his duty to his country unless treated with confidence, unless informed of the national policy! For the success of the Admiral, Mr. Daniels accepted the kudos, with the utmost blandness. Quite as readily, he later launched an outrageously spiteful personal attack upon the gallant officer. Admiral Sims can afford to keep silent and to stand upon his record. But the country cannot afford to hesitate in repudiating the attack upon his honor as an officer and a gentleman.

With the close of hostilities, Mr. Daniels's main object became a rapid demobilization. In sending home enlisted men, the political pets naturally came first. This was as evident as it had been in every move before and during the war. But enlistments were very complicated. Before war had been declared, many young men had enlisted for the four-year period, "duration of the war" being a term not then in use. These young men held the enthusiastic belief that war was inevitable. After the declaration, a number of Congressional acts covered various classes of enlistments. It followed that, to meet the situation from the point of view of the Secretary, to provide for all the "constituents," many demobilization orders had to be sent forth to the service. Under these rulings, it shortly became possible for any man to secure his discharge upon one ground or

another. Dozens were, and still are, discharged "by special order of the Secretary of the Navy," upon the mere request of some one with sufficient political influence. The thousands of men thus lost to the service included great numbers who profited by special rulings made for their shipmates. With shipping-board and other lucrative positions open to them, with "business depression" a vague chimera of the distant future, it is not surprising that men of all ratings took advantage of the opportunities for discharge, or, failing any excuse, simply "jumped ship."

Protests by naval commanders met with their usual reception. The inestimably valuable war-training was thrown overboard, regardless. No attention was paid to the obvious fact that with the glamour of war rubbed off, replacements would be impossible. The equally obvious effect upon millions of dollars worth of material was likewise ignored. "Get my heroes home" was the cry of Mr. Daniels. Naval officers had not been permitted properly to prepare the Navy for war. They had as little to say in preparing it for peace.

To appreciate the result of too-rapid demobilization, one has but to visit any navy yard. This will prove a distressing—more, an alarming experience. At first sight, a very forest of masts and spars may be inspiring. But a little closer approach will bring out the fact that the majority of the ships fly no colors, that no soul moves about their decks. To all intents and purposes they are the dead shells of once living entities. Such few as may still be in commission will be found undermanned in mere numbers, woefully inadequate in trained personnel. This includes all classes of vessels, notably battleships, submarines, and destroyers. In the fall of 1919 only two battleships, the *Delaware* and the *North Dakota*, were considered by naval commanders as even fairly fit for service. Today it is a freely discussed question whether the flagship *Pennsylvania* and her sisters of the Atlantic Fleet, with their shortages and their green crews, can safely leave the docks for anything more than short cruises along the coast. The battleships attending the San Francisco Convention are in little better case. Among a number of submarines based upon Newport there will be found about enough trained men to man one boat. The last war was fought, on the sea, largely by destroyers. In a flotilla of more than three hundred of

these vessels it is now possible to keep in active operation eighteen on each coast. Any personnel that can be begged, borrowed, or stolen for destroyers, in excess of the needs of the thirty-six boats in full commission, will be spread in a pitifully thin layer over the remainder. Quite unable to operate, the Reserve Squadrons have been gathered in the back waters of several navy yards. From time to time, new vessels, fresh from the hands of the builders, will be added to these potential scrap-heaps. A modern destroyer costs about a million and a half. It takes men, and trained men, merely to lay up her machinery in grease and tallow. Practically speaking, there are no such men left in the Navy.

Officers and men grown gray in the service look with breaking hearts upon its disintegration. They have watched their valiant efforts to save the situation brought to nothing. They have seen preferment offered to, and alas! accepted by, a scattered few of their brothers and ship-mates who could not keep loyalty to service and country above something that passes as loyalty to an individual. They have seen merit and initiative pretty well crushed. They have seen "Department General and Special Orders," once documents respected by all hands, come down to convenient, though somewhat stiff, shaving papers. Because of their interpretation of the ethics of "complaining," because families must be supported, most of the officers have said nothing publicly. A few, like Admiral Fiske, have raised their voices. The course set by Admiral Sims has been courageously followed by Admirals Grant, Plunkett, and Decker, by Captains Palmer, Taussig, and Laning, and by a few others. The efforts of these officers have been opposed by gag rules, by politics, and chiefly by national apathy in the matter, so successfully as to dishearten the Navy as a whole. But it would take long searching to find one officer or man who could, in honesty, refuse to subscribe to what has been said here.

Mr. Daniels found the Navy in good material condition, manned by a strong, self-respecting personnel, animated from end to end by a fine spirit and a high purpose.

Mr. Daniels, after seven years in office, will leave the Navy a battered hulk which it will take years of careful repairing to make seaworthy.

ARCHIBALD DOUGLAS TURNBULL.